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Suriname Becoming Another Cuba

Suriname is developing into another Cuba-style dictatorship in the Western Hemisphere. Marxist strongman Desi Bouterse, desperate for cash to keep his repressive regime afloat, has turned to two tainted sources of money: Libya's dictator and Colombia's drug dealers. But he's learning that there's no free lunch in foreign aid.

When the Netherlands granted its South American colony independence in 1975, the Dutch promised \$100 million a year in aid until 1990. The stipend continued even after Bouterse's military coup in 1980 and his growing leftward tilt.

Bouterse cultivated and modeled himself after Maurice Bishop, then the Marxist prime minister of Grenada. At Bishop's suggestion, Bouterse succumbed to Fidel Castro's overtures and welcomed a Cuban ambassador to Paramaribo in September 1982.

Cuban aid soon followed, as did the quid pro quo. Dozens of Cubans arrived in Suriname to assist Bouterse in setting up a Marxist dictatorship—which would be under Castro's control. The Cubans trained Bouterse's bodyguards, and even acted in that capacity themselves. Surinamese officials were sent to Cuba for indoctrination.

Both the Dutch and U.S. governments (the United States was also sending Suriname some modest aid) grew increasingly uneasy at the blossoming Bouterse-Castro relationship. In December 1982, when Bouterse rounded up and executed 15 opposition leaders, Dutch and American aid was cut off.

Castro, himself dependent on Moscow gold to

bolster the shaky Cuban economy and his foreign adventures, proved slow in providing the money he had promised Bouterse. So, according to our CIA sources, the Surinamese dictator accepted the offer of a loan from Colombian marijuana and cocaine traffickers.

Meanwhile, Brazil, which borders Suriname on the south, woke up to the danger of this Castro foothold and sent a military force across the border in April 1983. Literally under the gun, Bouterse agreed to decrease the Cuban presence in his country in return for a \$300 million aid deal with Brazil.

Bouterse dragged his feet on the bargain, until Bishop was deposed and murdered by Cuban-backed Grenadan Marxists. Blaming Castro for the death of his friend and mentor, and fearing for his own neck after the U.S.-led invasion of Grenada, Bouterse sent his Cuban advisers packing. Though he had previously claimed that there were only 15 Cubans in Suriname, about 100 were kicked out (leaving only eight, according to our sources).

This left Bouterse with nothing but his own poverty-stricken populace and the Brazilians to support his dictatorship. He needed more money, and gratefully accepted a promise of \$100 million from Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi.

What does Qaddafi expect for his money? Our sources say he hopes to expand his influence in South America. He also wants Surinamese passports for Libyan assassination squads, and hopes to supply them to his Palestinian terrorist sidekicks as well.